

Duke Students Go For Big Sound Of University Radio

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For today's young people, children of the mass media, sound is in. And the in-sound at Duke University is WDBS radio, a student run organization that broadcasts music, news, and sports twenty-four hours every day.

Founded in 1949 in a dormitory, WDBS began as a small operation that reached only parts of Duke's West Campus. Today the station occupies eight rooms in Duke's Bivins Building on East Campus, and is planning to expand by setting up a Special News Bureau and Public Affairs Center in the West Campus Student Union Building.

WDBS coverage already includes both campuses. It is staffed by 65 Duke students who serve as announcers, reporters, engineers, salesmen, and managers.

Evans Wetmore, of Rickville, Me., station general manager, is one of six managers elected by the Duke University Radio Council, which includes representatives of students, faculty, and administration and acts as the station's Board of Directors. A former engineer at WRC-NBC TV in Washington, D.C., Evans is one of several staff members with experience in. But he is quick to point out, "Most of our people are getting their experience here. Some apply for their third class licenses in broadcasting and many have found a year of announcing at WDBS helpful in getting summer jobs in the field."

Evans himself says he "stumbled into WDBS as a freshman one rainy night, and I haven't left yet." His is one of the six salaried jobs at the station, and he estimates that he puts in 30-40 hours of work there each week. His official duty is general coordination of

the station's activities. In addition, he keeps a tight rein on news coverage.

"We play it straight" Evans says. "I'm very strict about this. We do not allow editorializing with the body of the news."

Although restricted to only six minutes of each hour, news is of great importance to the management of the station, whose stated purpose is "to inform and entertain the student body, while providing opportunity for training in broadcasting to interested students."

In fact, the largest part of the station's budget is for news. News Director Jeff Miller has a staff of more than 20 newsmen, who gather, edit report, and announce campus and pertinent "outside" news.

For three years, the station has been affiliated with ABC Contemporary News, but the news department now uses the network only for live coverage of events of national interest, such as a moon shot or a major political address. Additional national news comes in on UPI Radio Newswire, the local Tobacco Network and Metromedia Radio News.

When they are not announcing or editing newswire copy, newsmen keep alert for campus happenings and phone in special reports. Announcers work shifts with disc jockeys and report their news from a small news booth off the main studio.

Sophomore Jeff Miller, of Beckley, W. Va., who has worked at a West Virginia radio station, feels WDBS must do on-the-spot reporting whenever possible, and he was among 10 WDBS staff members who broadcast directly from Washington, D.C., from a Georgetown University studio during the anti-war Mobilization on Nov. 15. A remote control and walkie-talkie unit on campus spot reports possible, too.